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ABSTRACT

Even though current wisdom holds that adoptive parents should talk with their child about adoption as early as possible, no guidelines exist to prepare parents for the various ways their children might respond when these conversations take place. This book discusses how young children make sense of the fact that they are adopted, how their awareness might appear in their play, and what worries they and their parents may have. The introduction looks at changes in adoption practice. Chapter 1 explores the meaning of adoption from the perspective of the parent. Chapter 2 reviews some of the research on adoption outcome, research that is often outdated and disheartening, reflecting not scientific truth but cultural bias and apprehension about adoption. Chapter 3 examines adoption from the child's perspective and explores the ways in which young adoptive children understand and communicate about adoption. Chapter 4 contains accounts by 20 adoptive parents of conversations about adoption with their children, ages 2 to 10, that graphically convey what the process of sharing about adoption is like. Two appendices contain stories of families who chose not to talk with their young children about adoption and the adoptive comments, questions, and play sequences of adopted children in the stories. Contains over 180 references. (TJQ)

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